

Chapter No. 2033
16/HR43/R1419.1
GV / AM

***HOUSE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 57***

Originated in House  Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 57

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING
JEREMIAH "JERRY" JOSEPH O'KEEFE UPON RECEIVING THE U.S.
CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL FOR HIS HEROIC ACTIONS DURING WORLD WAR
II.

WHEREAS, on June 5, 2015, Jeremiah "Jerry" Joseph O'Keefe,
was presented with the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal during a
celebration of the 150th anniversary of Bradford-O'Keefe Funeral
Home in honor of his service as an ace fighter pilot during World
War II; and

WHEREAS, every U.S. Congressional Gold Medal is unique to the
recipient, and Mr. O'Keefe received one that is reserved only for
service members who have achieved the title of ace through the
destruction of five or more enemy aircraft in aerial combat; and

WHEREAS, Mr. O'Keefe was one of the youngest Americans at age
21 to become an ace fighter pilot, earning the designation for
shooting down seven enemy planes; and

WHEREAS, at 92 years of age, Mr. O'Keefe is one of about 77
pilots from the "Greatest Generation" still living who are

eligible to receive the medal, which is Congress' highest civilian award; and

WHEREAS, following his sense of duty and patriotism, Mr. O'Keefe enlisted in the United States Navy following the attack on Pearl Harbor, and within weeks, the 19-year-old was at the controls of a training aircraft in flight school at Pensacola Naval Air Station; and

WHEREAS, as part of Marine Fighter Squadron VMF-323, the "Death Rattlers," Mr. O'Keefe was involved in efforts to intercept incoming kamikaze suicide bombers flying from Japan to attack the United States fleet offshore, and it was during one of the missions that he became a so-called "Ace in a day"; and

WHEREAS, after World War II, Mr. O'Keefe returned home, finished his degree and became a successful businessman and politician, serving in the Mississippi House of Representatives and as the Mayor of Biloxi; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal, Mr. O'Keefe has also received several other medals for his achievements, including the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal and the Gold Star; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to acknowledge an individual of the esteemed caliber as that of Jerry O'Keefe, whose heroic and admirable actions during World War II, in addition to his public service to the State of Mississippi, brings honor to every citizen of this state:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and congratulate Jerry O'Keefe upon receiving the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal for his heroic actions during World War II and express our sincere gratitude for his service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to Mr. Jeremiah "Jerry" Joseph O'Keefe, the Biloxi City Council and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 24, 2016


SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 25, 2016


PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE